

## DECEMBER 2023



Merry Christmas!

So often December can be an exhausting month for women. We are planning out menus, purchasing gifts, decorating the house, writing Christmas cards, juggling Christmas gatherings for ourselves and family members, and attending all the end of the year concerts and performances of kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews. It is in the midst of the crazy that we need to remind ourselves to slow down and lift our eyes and hearts toward the Lord. We must remember that this is the “most wonderful time of the year” not because of the hustle and bustle but because it is a season to focus our attention on the miracle of Immanuel, God with Us!

Let me encourage you to find ways to keep the focus of the season on the Worship of our Savior:

- 31 days of Devotionals on the Briarwood Women’s Youtube Page
- Go through an Advent devotional, options available in the Briarwood Bookstore
- Fill your house and your car with Christmas Carols that sing of the Savior
- Provide opportunities to share with family and friends about Christ and your relationship with Him

May this Christmas season be filled with true worship of our Wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ!

Kristie



### Inside this issue

Christmas at the Caroline House.	2
Portraits of Hope .....	8
YouTube Devotional.....	9
Advent at Briarwood.....	10
In Town Retreat .....	12
Spring 2024 Bible Studies.....	13
Community Updates .....	14

### Special points of interest

- December YouTube Devotional begins December 1
- Advent at Briarwood
- Women’s In Town Retreat January 26-27

As you all know, every event has a host of people who are working hard behind the scenes to make things happen. Christmas at the Caroline House could not have happened without the help of the following people:

### **2023 House Decorators**

**Front Entry:** Beth Jordan, Elizabeth Jordan, Catherine Godwin, and Susan Maxey

**Foyer:** Mary Beth Bush, Lindsey McGehee

**Living Room:** Danielle Yancey

**Sunroom:** Hannah Delk

**Kitchen:** Shannon Black, Janae Eller, Lisa Looper, Elizabeth Buchanan, Sarah Ivey, Vicky Taylor

**Dining Room:** Marion Petty

**Breakfast Room:** Kate King, Katie Barr, Sarah Boyd, Casey Snipes, Sloan Crawford, Shana Moton, Holly Hollon, Molly Hendry, Jennifer Hunt

**Master Bedroom:** Susan Alexander, Vicki Page, Barbie Harrell

**Girl's Bedroom:** Sue Cizek, Amanda Cizek, Julie Olmedo, Danae Lloyd, Chiyomi Akasaka, Yuko Hoshino

**Jack N' Jill Bathroom:** Katrina Porter, Abigail Corcoran, Elizabeth Fievet

**Playroom:** Miller Hershey, Charleigh Steelman, Christian-Emilee Van Puffelen



### **Speakers from Portraits of Hope**

Jessica Krittner, Tasha Downs, Cynthia Dugger, Amanda Cassidy, Candace Jones



### **Caroline House Devotional Book**

Program/Art Design and overall branding: Holly Hollon

Graphics: Rebecca Galbreath

Meditations/Devotional Writings: Christy Bono, Caroline Carlisle, Rebekah Vermeer



**Fellowship Hall Greeters and Servers:** Margi Lyles, Pat Moulton, Sally Beth Dougherty, Sonya Stallings, Tammy Moore, Diane Eaton, Cindy Ball, Rebecca Black, D'onne Salmon, Jan Ricketts, Jess Merkle, Anna Woodfin, Trafina Jadhav, Maya Johnson, Kate Dale, Amy Kathryn Stokes, Linda Grinnell, Donna Arrington, Susan Greenall, Janice Peterson, Betty Matthews, Leslie Cushman, Elizabeth McRae, Lisa Bunn, Ashley Draper, Elizabeth Buchanan, Kate Noel, Deb Quenelle, Felicity Martin, Ginny Green

**Caroline House Hostesses:** Susan Dobbs, Katie Saunders, Patsy Medlock, Elizabeth Bondurant, Kay Lummis, Mary Beth Bush, Caroline Carlisle, Karen Carlisle, Kendall Reaves, Amy Monroe, Betsy Campbell, Sarah Ivey, Felicity Martin, Meredith Peters, Joy Moore, Judy Flannery, Peggy Adams, Abby Leib, Rebecca Green, Jessica Robinson, Terry Millican

**Bus Drivers/Assistants:** George Harrick, Chuck Crawford, Ben Stallings, Connor Curtis, Joseph Mungenast, Matt Bush, Mike Bush, Cory Hershey, Paul Cizek, Jay Shaw, Marie Gathings, Kellie Stewart, Linda Grinnell, Philip Holcombe, Patrick Younes, Brian Handley

**Fellowship Hall Centerpieces:** Elizabeth Bondurant, Lynn Cline, Beth Mooney, Paty Pruet, Claire Roebuck, Amy Lattner, Shannon Black, Judy Black, Cindy Ball, Connie Livingston, Janice Peterson

**Food:** Sherri Blahnik and staff

**Facilities, Maintenance and Grounds Crew:**

Serving as our point person: Kate Foster  
 For coordinating all the furniture moving and house preps  
 For providing all the fresh greenery  
 For unlocking and locking the House every day

**Nursesey Team:** Alison Craig and team

**Bookstore Team:**

For selling tickets for us



Again, thank you to all who gave of their time!

















CHARLES BILLINGSLEY



# IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME, AGAIN!

Christmas Classics for All Ages

*Charles Billingsley*

FEATURING

Sadie Goodman &  
Denver and The Mile High Orchestra

**Thursday, December 14 | 7 p**

Samford University Wright Center



BENEFITTING

PORTRAITS  
OF *Hope*

[www.portraitsofhope.charity](http://www.portraitsofhope.charity)

You can also look at [www.portraitsofhope.charity](http://www.portraitsofhope.charity) to see more  
info about Portraits of Hope





Starting December 1st we will be kicking off our month of YouTube video devotionals.

Each day you can hear from a different woman of Briarwood as she unfolds the Biblical truths behind some of our most familiar Christmas carols.

[Briarwood Women's YouTube](#)



# **CHRISTMAS AT BRIARWOOD**

## **Children's Christmas Choir**

### **"A Joyful Noel"**

December 3 • 6:00 p.m.

## **Walk Through Nativity**

December 6–8 • 6:45–8:45 p.m.

## **Briarwood Ballet**

### **"O, Come Let Us Adore Him"**

December 10 • 6:00 p.m.

## **Briarwood Christmas Festival**

### **"Hallelujah! The Light Has Come"**

December 17 • 6:00 p.m.

## **Christmas Eve Services**

### **December 24**

Morning Worship Service

10:00 a.m.

Family Candlelight Service

5:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Candlelight Communion Service

11:00 p.m.

**[Briarwood.org/advent](http://Briarwood.org/advent)**



## ***Sparkle in the Dark***

By Linda Smedley

Winking at us in the dark of night -- each year seemingly earlier than the year before -- we are surprised by the first lights of Christmas. Twinkling Christmas trees peek from windows. Large, illuminated bulbs race along pointed rooftops. Glowing stars dangle above porches. Monstrously oversized lighted snowflakes cling to city posts. Tiny white lights glimmer in spindly trees. Fairy lights twine around wreaths and garlands and railings and tabletop decorations. Eagerly our eyes search the night for the next shimmering bulb lighting the way toward Christmas. We long for sparkle amid the darkness. More and more and more!

For all of time, we have been seeking to capture and to perfect the use of light -- firelight, oil lamps, candlelight, gas lighting, electric lighting, fluorescent lighting, LED lighting, medical lasers, solar power..... and yet...still...we are not satisfied. Driven by desire for light—bigger, better, brighter, more beautiful – for what are we truly striving? Certainly, light is essential for mankind’s physical and emotional well-being. Light produces vitamin D assisting in the absorption of calcium and phosphorus. Light optimizes crop growth for our physical nourishment. Sunlight helps to counteract seasonal affective disorders. For innumerable years, sunlight, moonlight, and the light of stars have served as a guide to mark time and direction. Without hesitation, we declare -- light is vital to mankind. We look for light. We long for light. We yearn desperately for light. But why? What are we truly seeking?

Ponder. Or cogitate as Papa would say. Light was the very first substance that God created (Genesis 1:3) and light has served as a witness of God’s presence with mankind ever since. From a burning bush, God spoke to Moses (Exodus 3:2). By night, a pillar of fire led the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 13:21). In the velvety black sky, constellations, shooting stars, the Northern Lights ... all declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1). Beneath the light of a magnificent star, magi were led to Bethlehem to humbly worship Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 2:9). Jesus declares Himself the light of the world (John 8:12). And, at the end of time, the nearness of the Lord alone will be our source of light (Revelation 21:23 and 22:5). Light ... God’s presence ... the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).

And in between? Our souls hunger for The Light. As the lights of Christmas sparkle in the dark of night...in the darkness of pain...in the darkness of doubt...in the darkness of sin...what light will you seek? What light will you follow? May Jesus, the true Light of Christmas, be your guide.

***Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying,  
“I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness,  
but will have the Light of life.”  
John 8:12***

Additional Scripture Readings: Psalm 119:105; Luke 1:78-79; John 1:1-5



2024 BRIARWOOD WOMEN'S IN-TOWN RETREAT

# BY DESIGN

JAN. 26-27, 2024

**EZER**  
**DEFINED:**  
*8 Biblical Expressions*

TAKE THE QUIZ  
TO FIND OUT:  
**ARE YOU A  
LIFE GIVER  
OR A LIFE  
TAKER?**

SEX,  
FEMINISM  
& GENDER  
by The Book

**EMBRACE  
YOUR  
MAKE**

*Psalm 139:14*

**UNIQUELY  
FASHIONED**  
BY THE POTTER



REGISTER ONLINE AT:  
[BRIARWOOD.ORG/WOMEN](http://BRIARWOOD.ORG/WOMEN)

You are invited to the **Women's Ministry In Town Retreat**  
the weekend of **January 26-27, 2023.**

Tickets will go on sale **December 20<sup>th</sup>**, \$45 per person. Women 7<sup>th</sup> grade and up are invited to attend.

The Theme of the event is:

## **By Design**

**Schedule:**

**Friday night, January 26**

**6:45-9:00 pm**

**Location: Worship Center**

**Retreat Fun, Giveaways, & Worship**

**Large Session #1**

**Speaker: Courtney Denton**

**Saturday, January 27th**

**8:30 – 1:30 pm**

**Briarwood Campus**

**8:30 – 10:30 am**

**Location: Worship Center**

**Retreat Fun, Giveaways, & Worship**

**Large Session #2**

**Speaker: Courtney Denton**

**10:45 – 11:45 am**

**Breakout sessions**

**Various locations**

**12:00 – 1:30 pm**

**Lunch and final challenge**

**Location: Fellowship Hall ABCD**

***Dress is comfy casual.***

***No childcare available Friday or Saturday.***

***However, nursing moms are welcome to bring their baby as needed.***



# Spring 2024 Women's Bible Studies

**Mondays at 10:00AM:**

**Ezra & Nehemiah**

Michele Cantley

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**Tuesdays at 9:30AM:**

**1 & 2 Peter**

Cindy Reeder and Mary Lou Morrison

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**Tuesdays at 9:30AM:**

**Titus**

Amanda León and Mary Anne Turnbull

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**Wednesdays at 6:30PM:**

**2 Kings**

Kristie Harrick and Elizabeth Bondurant

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**Thursdays at 9:30AM:**

**John**

Yvonne Welch

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**Thursdays at 9:30AM:**

**Hebrews**

Donna Evans

# Behold & Believe

ENCOUNTERING JESUS AS THE GREAT I AM

## **The Gospel Coalition Women's Conference (TGCW24) June 20-24, 2024 in Indianapolis, Indiana**

Registration is open!

Briarwomen this is a wonderful conference to attend. The cost only covers the conference fee. Participants are responsible for travel and accommodations. Once hotel options are available we will notify everyone of what hotel we are staying in. If you are able to stay in the same hotel that would be great. When registering for rooms in hotels, please note that not all hotels guarantee double beds.

If you register, please let us know. We would love to find a time during the conference that we could all meet up. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/event/tgcw24/>





# Community Updates

## The Lydia Luncheon



## Joyful Hearts Sunday School

Laura and Larry Comoglio will be celebrating their 63rd wedding anniversary on December 17th.



# Community Updates



**Betty and Dave Matthews will be celebrating their 51st wedding anniversary on December 28th.**



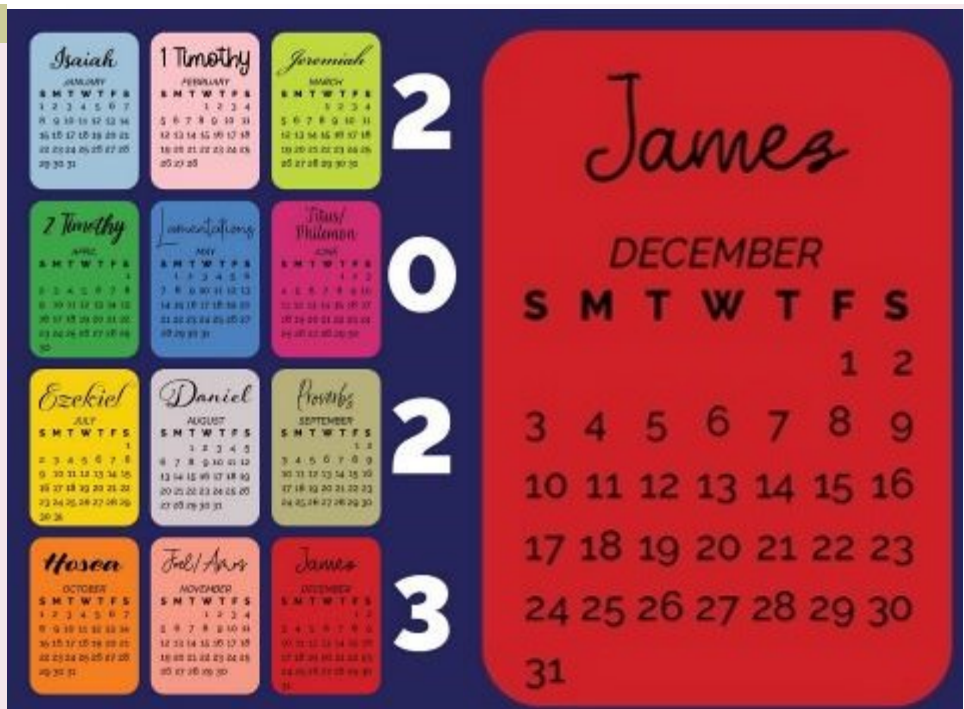
**Congratulations to  
Chesley Peed on her  
engagement to  
Richard Kalehoff!**



## 5 Year Bible Reading Plan

You can download the 5-year plan by visiting:

<https://briarwood.org/women-of-the-covenant/five-year-bible-reading-plan/>



## Briarwood Women's Care Team

The Briarwood Women's Care Team's primary focus is to serve as advocates for women experiencing significant needs and/or in crisis, and to come alongside the staff and leadership as they minister to women in the congregation in difficult circumstances.

To find out more information, or to request help, visit:

[briarwood.org/women-of-the-covenant/womens-care-team/](https://briarwood.org/women-of-the-covenant/womens-care-team/)

